



Afghan Refugee Help Fund

City of Fremont's Afghan Refugee Help Fund Final Report

August 2021 – August 2022

Establishing the ARHelp Fund

For over 30 years, the City of Fremont's Human Services Department has established a deep relationship with the Afghan community – welcoming Afghan refugees from both the Russian occupations and the Taliban, which has resulted in Fremont having one of the largest thriving Afghan populations in the country.

When the United States Armed Forces withdrew from Afghanistan resulting in Taliban's subsequent return to power, the City and the surrounding community immediately looked for ways to support the [9,880 Afghan refugees coming to California](#) and the 76,000 Afghans fleeing to the United States as a whole.

As a result, the City launched the Afghan Refugee Help (ARHelp) Fund as a way for the community and broader nation to easily assist refugees who were expected to arrive in the area.



Our Community and Nation's Generosity

With the extreme generosity of thousands of individuals as well as assistance from national media exposure, the fund raised over **\$482,901 from 1,213 donors** to cover the costs of filing immigration documents, provide cell phones to newcomers who arrive without them, assist with temporary housing, and more. In fact, in the first weekend that the fund was opened, it received over \$53,000 from 317 donors.

Donations of all sizes came from large companies to individual donors hoping to make Afghan refugees feel as welcome and supported as possible upon arrival in the U.S.

“After hearing about the influx of Afghan refugees, our class felt called to use our annual fundraiser in 2021 to address this acute need. From consulting one of the professors at Loma Linda University who has worked with the Afghan refugee population, we were excited to hear about this fund in Fremont and all the work that they were already doing, and we knew that we wanted to help contribute to it! ”

— Janene Kuan,

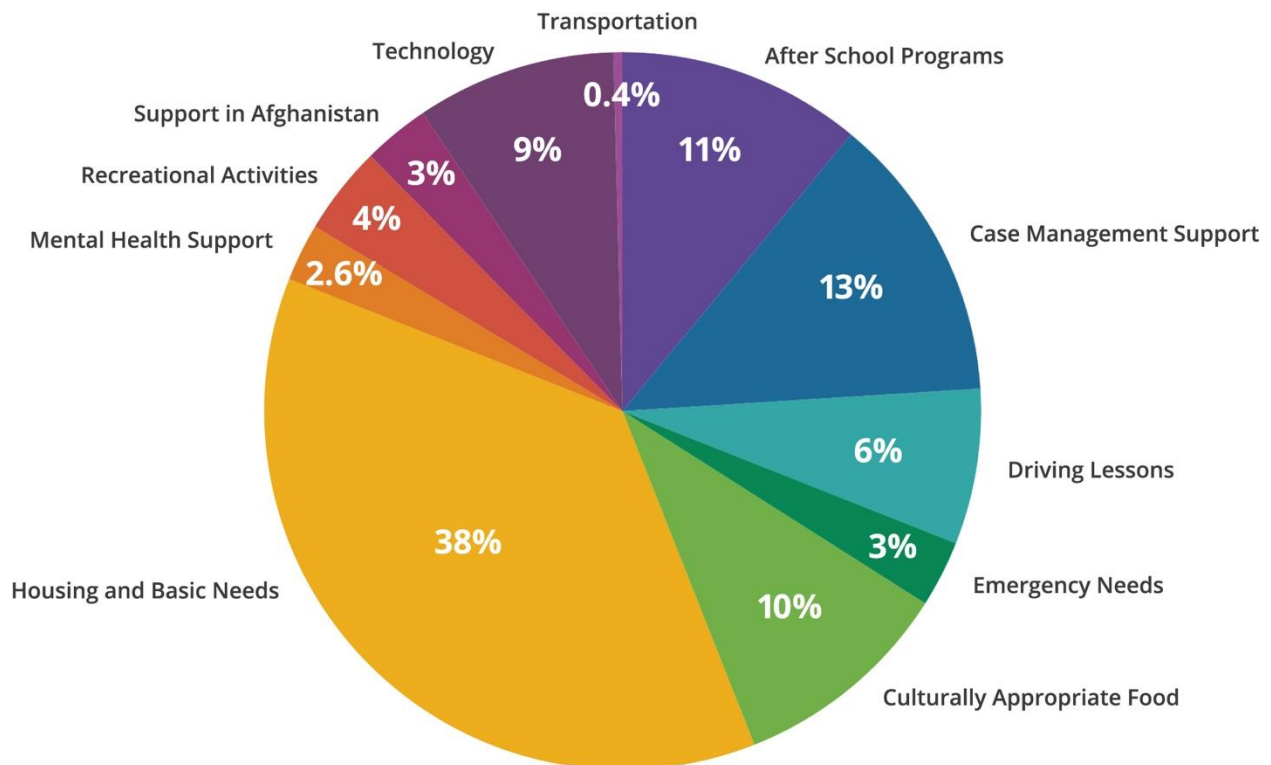
MS4 Community Service Representative
and student of Loma Linda University School of Medicine

In particular, the City would like to thank donors who generously contributed sums of \$2,500 or greater:

- Hirini and Targan Amin
- Berean Mission Church
- Foundation Capital
- Kaiser Permanente Southern Alameda County Community Health Program
- Loma Linda University School of Medicine Class of 2023
- The Employees of Mammoth Biotech
- Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation
- Mongue-Wilson Family
- Sisters of the Holy Family
- Touch Point Foundation
- Virginia L. Jones Foundation
- Washington High School's Community Outreach Commission 2021/22
- Washington Hospital Employee Association
- Youth Art Foundation
- Anonymous donors

What We Accomplished Together

With the help of our donors' generosity, the fund was able to provide 32 organizations with funding for many crucial needs, including housing and basic necessities, technology enhancements, case management support, after-school programs, culturally appropriate food, transportation, and more. Please see the below pie chart for a full distribution breakdown of funds.



Some of the funds also went towards needs that were not initially considered when the fund was launched. For example, upon hearing about the fund, a driving school instructor from A-Hero Driving School, who is also an Afghan refugee, reached out to the City requesting funding for refugee driving lessons.

The fund provided over **\$25,000** worth of driving lessons for **48** individuals that not only provided refugees with greater independence, but also opened new avenues for different forms of employment, as many employers require applicants to have a valid license.



“Afghans have been coming every day, and they are trying to get their driving license as soon as possible because without a driving license, nobody is willing to hire them,”
a Crisis Counselor who referred refugees for driving lessons said.
“This process helps them stand on their own two feet.”

In total, the ARHelp Fund supported **48** individuals in receiving driving lessons.

Funds were also used to support 10 refugees receiving three months of singing lessons, which [has been found](#) to reduce anxiety in young adults as well as enhance mood and overall sense of purpose. Additionally, these lessons also provided refugees with a way to continue to express and celebrate their Afghan culture.

Funding Highlights

In addition to the funding uses listed above and those featured in the [6-month report](#), there were several other key funding highlights we'd like to applaud:



- The fund awarded [PARS Equality Center](#) **\$30,000** to hire case managers to assist with completing documentation for humanitarian parole applications.
- The [Muslim Community Center of the East Bay](#) was given **\$25,000** to support **15 families'** deposit and first month's rent at their new housing units.
- Also receiving **\$25,000** was [Refugee & Immigrant Transitions](#), which used the funds to provide emergency financial support for **50 refugees**.
- The [East Bay Agency for Children](#) received **\$24,500** to support **24+ Afghan newcomers** with up to \$1,000 of emergency financial support.
- [CityServe](#) was given **\$28,500** to connect refugee families with volunteer families to deliver kitchen supplies, take refugees shopping, provide them with school supplies, and provide them with three months of check-ins.
- [Islamic Circle of North America \(ICNA\)](#) received **\$19,201** to support the housing costs, including supplies, furniture, and clothing for **17 Alameda County refugee families**.

Thank You to Our Donors

As of August 2022, 100% of the funds have been distributed, and the fund has been closed. As a City, we are incredibly thankful to the 1,213 donors who permanently changed the lives of many refugees who arrived in Fremont and the broader Bay Area.

The City encourages anyone who is interested in continuing to support the Afghan community in Fremont with their time or in-kind donations to reach out to the [Afghan Coalition](#), [The 5ivePillars Organization](#), [PARS Equality Center](#), [Burman Refugee Families and Newcomers \(BRFN\)](#), or [Refugee and Immigrant Transitions \(RIT\)](#).